

# VISUAL STORY

PREPARING FOR  
YOUR VISIT TO  
QTOPIA SYDNEY



**QTOPIA**  
SYDNEY

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# TODAY I'LL BE VISITING QTOPIA SYDNEY

This visual and written guide will assist you in planning your visit and what you'll discover at Qtopia Sydney.

I should bring this guide with me so that I know where to go and what I will encounter.

# SYMBOLS IN THIS VISUAL STORY

## SENSORY SYMBOLS

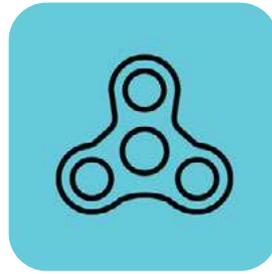
These symbols are items that I can bring with me to help with my comfort with any sensory sensitivities I have.



Noise reducing headphones



Hat or sunglasses



Fidget or stimming toy

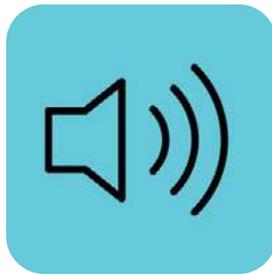
These symbols let me know of any sensations like bright lights, smells, loud noises, or visual elements.



Bright Lights



Strong Smells



Loud Noises



Visual

## GENERAL SYMBOLS

These symbols are for general information I will find or need while I am here.



Information



Tickets



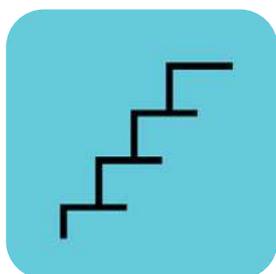
Toilets



Accessible Toilets

## MOBILITY SYMBOLS

These symbols let me know if there is wheelchair access, or if there are any obstructions I need to know about.



Stairs or Step



Hazard



Wheelchair access



Rest Spot

# RULES OF QTOPIA SYDNEY

These rules are to ensure that everyone has a safe experience at Qtopia Sydney.



**Walking:** I will be walking (or rolling if in a wheelchair) through the exhibition. I will not be running.



**Do Not Touch:** I will need to keep my hands to myself. If I need to fidget, I can bring a stimming or fidget toy with me.



**No Food or Drink:** I will not be eating or drinking when I am inside the exhibition. I can bring water with me and drink it outside of the exhibition.



**Clean Hands:** I will need to clean my hands when I enter Qtopia Sydney, and when I go to the toilet.



**Waiting:** I may need to wait in a queue to enter Qtopia Sydney, as there will be other guests visiting.



# WHERE CAN I FIND QTOPIA SYDNEY?

Qtopia Sydney is located at 301 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst. It is on the corner of Forbes Street and Bourke Street.

I will see large pink banners out the front. I will head towards these.

The main entrance has big green doors, followed by a see-through electronic door with a rainbow heart on it.



# ENTERING QTOPIA SYDNEY

When I get to the entrance, I will walk through the electronic doors and be greeted by a volunteer.

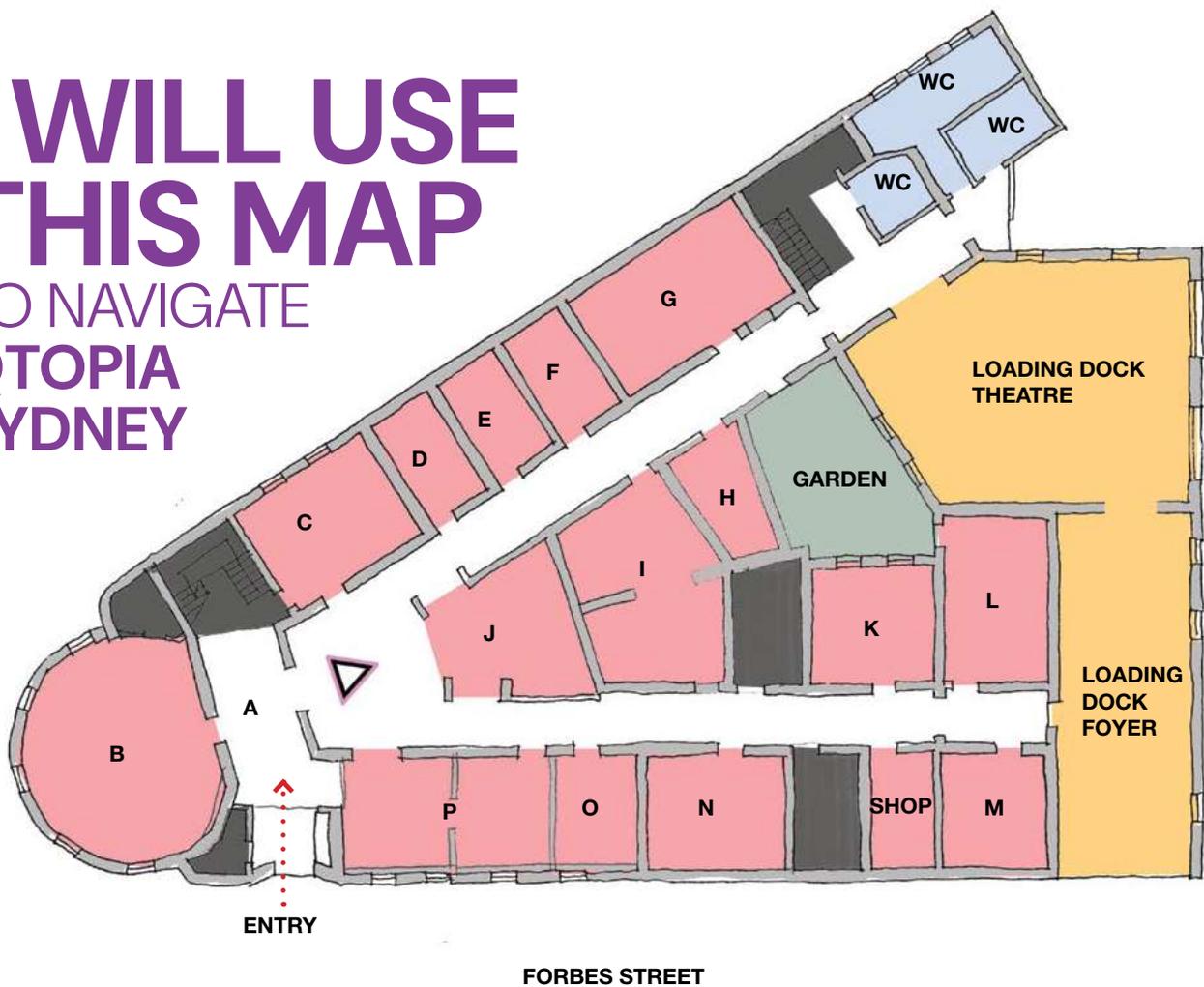
The volunteer will be wearing a Navy-Blue shirt with the Qtopia Sydney logo on it, and a yellow name tag.

I can purchase a ticket from the volunteer, or I can show them a ticket that I have already purchased.

If I have any questions, I can ask the volunteer for assistance.

# I WILL USE THIS MAP

TO NAVIGATE  
QTOPIA  
SYDNEY



## EXHIBITIONS

- A. BLESSING OF COUNTRY** – Blessing on Gadigal Country from Gadigal artist and Elder Nadeena Dixon.
- B. BECOMING** – How various forms of gender expression have interacted, intertwined, and evolved in our communities.
- C. INTERVIEWS WITH JONATHAN MORAN** – A collection of 24 interviews with Queer icons, community figures and allies.
- D. WHERE WE ARE** – A history of the site now housing Qtopia.
- E. 1978 HOUR BY HOUR** – Exploring the pivotal year for LGBTQIA+ rights in Sydney and Australia.
- F. THE APOLOGY** – Commissioner's 2018 Apology to the 78ers.
- G. CRIME TO FREEDOM** – The recent history of the path from being criminals to freedom and the pursuit of equality.
- H. DYKES ON BIKES** – A celebration of the institution of strong, visible, activist lesbian women on motor bikes.
- I. HIV TODAY / WARD 17 SOUTH** – A historical and contemporary context for the ongoing understanding of HIV/AIDS.
- J. HIV / AIDS MEMORIAL** – A serene and ever-evolving tribute to those lost.



- K.** **WE'RE HERE, WE'RE QUEER** – A celebration of LGBTQIA+ Pride in Australia.
- L.** **SYDNEY STAR OBSERVER** – A celebration of 45 years of the Star Observer.
- M.** **LESBIANS ON THE LOOSE** – Known at LOTL – the longest running lesbian publication in Australia.
- N.** **SYDNEY WORLD PRIDE** – A reflection of the international event that opened Sydney's LGBTQIA+ community to the world.

- O.** **DIRTY WORDS** – A showcase of some of Australia's powerful contemporary Queer First Nations writers.
- P.** **THE ORIGINAL ACTIVISTS** – A celebration of the LGBTQIA+ Trailblazers of First Nations communities.

# SUGGESTED ROUTE

This is the best and safest path for me to follow if I would like to see everything that Qtopia Sydney has to offer.

START ●



**1**  
WELCOME TO  
COUNTRY



**2**  
BECOMING



**3**  
INTERVIEWS  
WITH JONATHAN  
MORAN



**4**  
WHERE WE ARE



**5**  
1978 –  
HOUR BY HOUR



**6**  
THE APOLOGY



**7**  
CRIME TO  
FREEDOM



**DYKES ON BIKES**



**HIV TODAY/WARD  
17 SOUTH**



**HIV/AIDS  
MEMORIAL**



**WE'RE HERE,  
WE'RE QUEER**



**SYDNEY STAR  
OBSERVER**



**LESBIANS ON THE  
LOOSE**



**SYDNEY WORLD  
PRIDE**



**DIRTY WORDS**



**THE ORIGINAL  
ACTIVISTS**



**130 BPM:  
SOUNDTRACK TO  
A REVOLUTION**



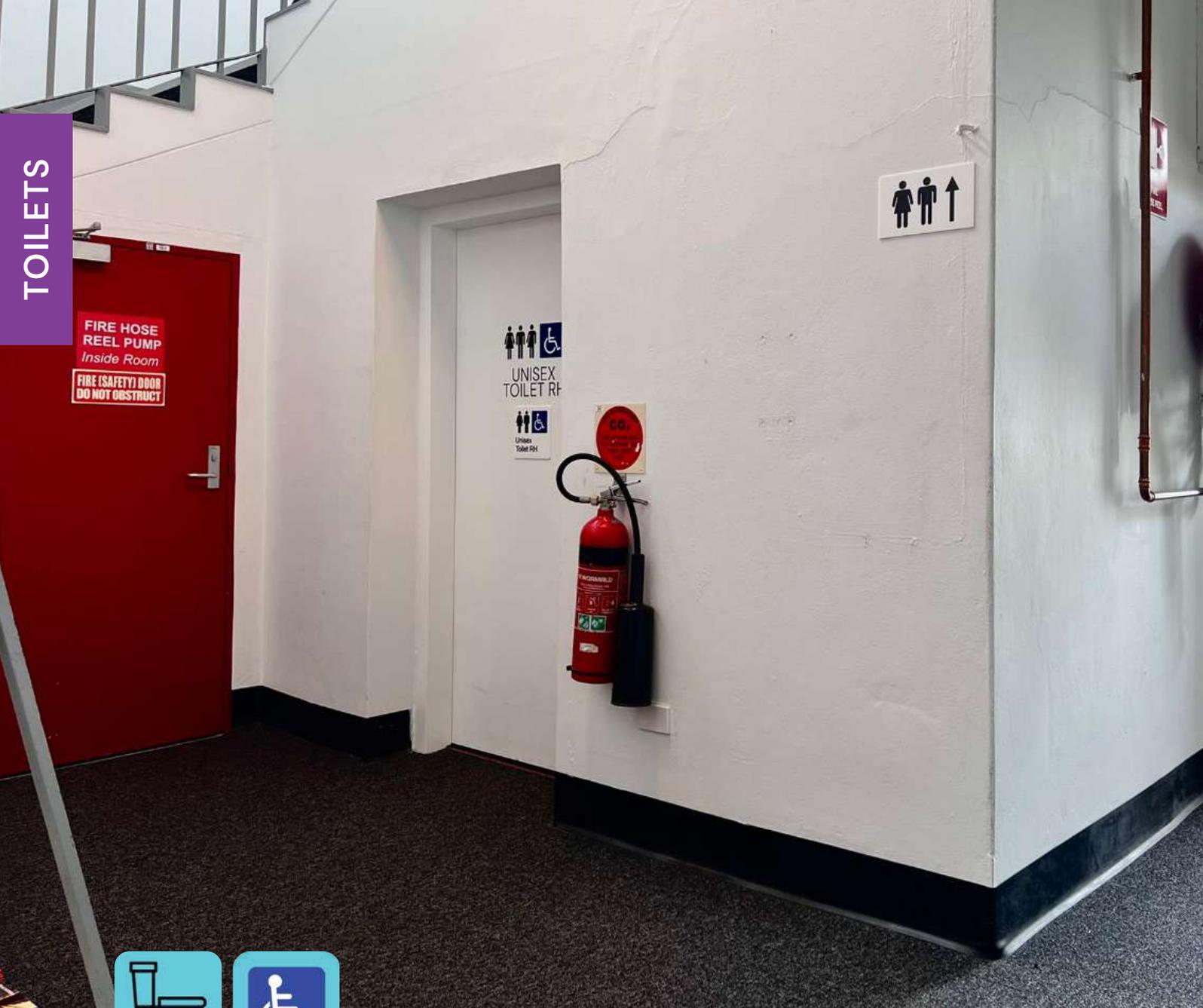
**THE  
UNDERGROUND:  
SEXUALITY AND  
PROTEST**

**FINISH**



# DOES QTOPIA SYDNEY HAVE?

- ✓ Toilets
- ✓ Wheelchair access
- ✓ Places to sit
- ✗ Cloak room
- ✗ Food/Cafeteria



# TOILETS

The bathrooms in Qtopia Sydney are located past the door at the back of the left corridor.

There is an accessible toilet to the left, and more toilets to the right past the next doorway.

If I need help finding or getting to the toilets, I can ask a volunteer and they will assist me.



## GIFT SHOP

The Gift Shop is located past in the right-hand corridor, past the wheelchair ramp, and on the right-hand side.

There is a range Qtopia Sydney merchandise for sale, like T-Shirts, Socks, Caps, and umbrellas. They also sell books provided by The Bookshop Darlinghurst, and colourful jewellery by Maine+Mara.

If I need help finding or getting to the Gift Shop, I can ask a volunteer and they will assist me.

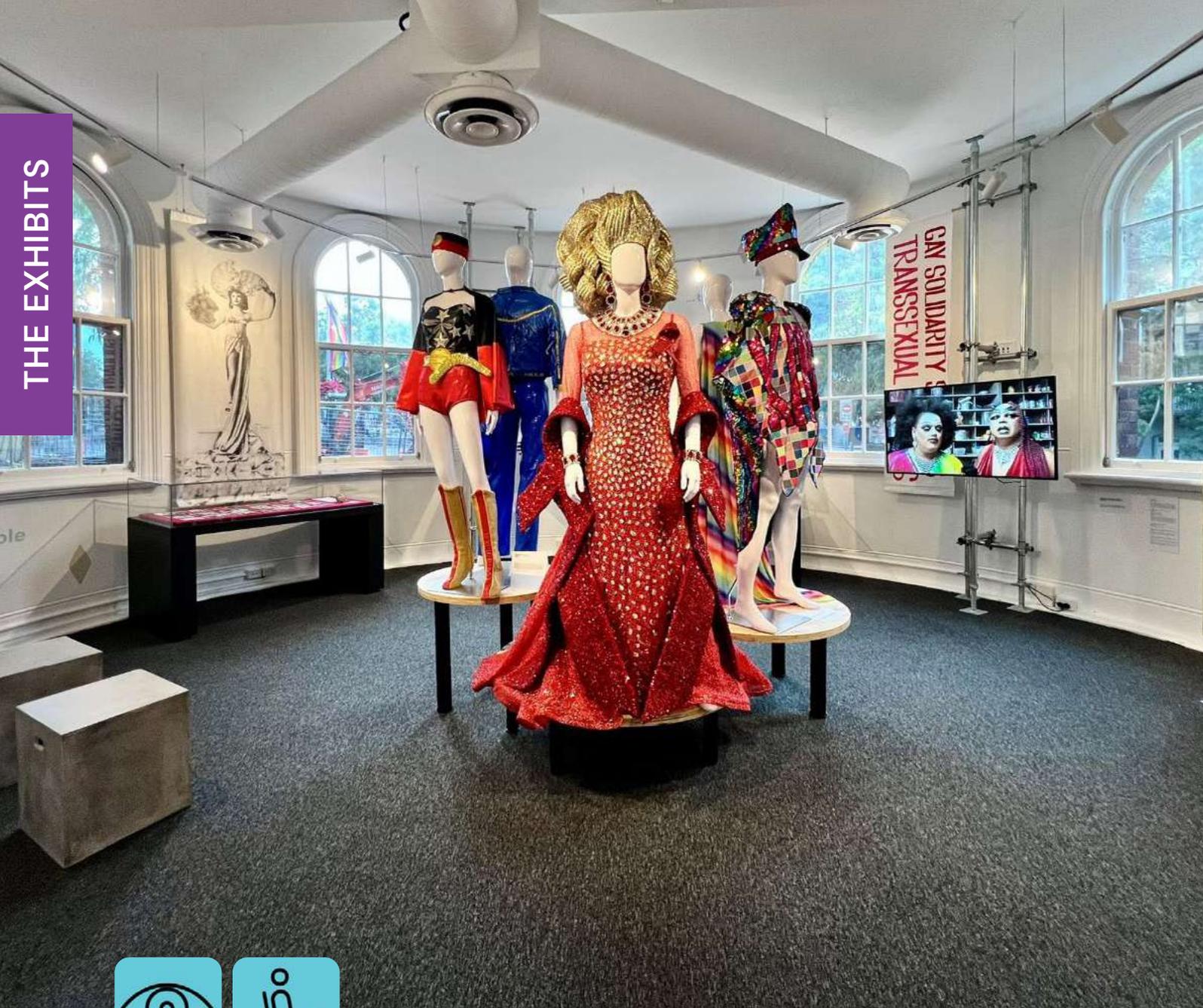


# THE EXHIBITS

## WELCOME TO COUNTRY

### What's in here?

- At the back of the foyer where I met the volunteer is an animated artwork. It is a Blessing on Gadigal Country from Gadigal artist and Elder Nadeema Dixon.
- Underneath the screen is a spiral of drawn gum leaves on a door. There is no access through this door.



## BECOMING

### What's in here?

- Becoming is a showcase of how various forms of gender expression have interacted and evolved in our communities.
- There are mannequins in the centre of the rooms displaying fabulous outfits from both drag entertainers and gender-diverse icons.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There are display cabinets and artworks showcasing gender expression, as well as a TV presentation.



## INTERVIEWS WITH JONATHAN MORAN

### What's in here?

- Interviews with Jonathon Moran is an exhibition that features a diverse collection of 24 compelling interviews.
- There are portraits on the side wall of each person being interviewed, each with a QR code underneath for later so I can watch these interviews at home.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There are cushioned benches here that face the television.



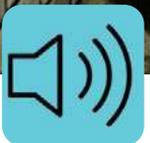
## WHERE WE ARE

### What's in here?

- This exhibit is contained within an original cell of Darlinghurst Police Station, a place that once discriminated against homosexuality, which has now transformed into a hub of queer storytelling.

### Anything else I should know about?

- The doorway of this room is very narrow.
- There is a small yellow step when entering the room.



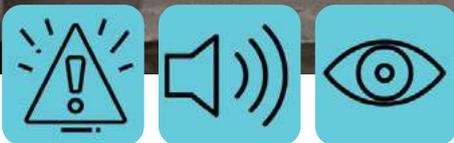
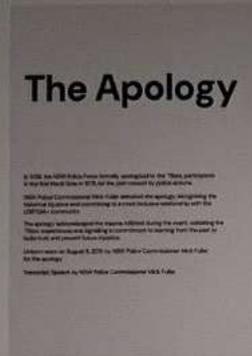
## 1978 – HOUR BY HOUR

### What's in here?

- This room is another narrow cell, that showcases the activism for Queer Rights that occurred in 1978, a very important year in Sydney's Queer history.
- There are photos and maps attached to wooden planks, plus a video playing on the wall behind me when I am in the room.

### Anything else I should know about?

- The doorway of this room is very narrow.
- There is a small yellow step when entering the room.



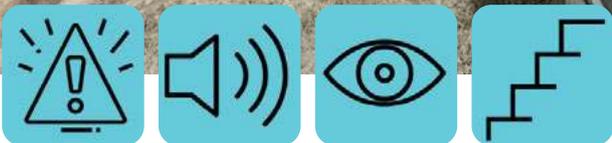
## THE APOLOGY

### What's in here?

- The Apology is an audio recording from 2016 of Police Commissioner Mick Fuller's apology to the participants of the first Mardi Gras in 1978. This plays inside a locked cell.
- If I look in the peephole, there is a video of subtitles for the audio, as well as a mannequin in a police uniform.

### Anything else I should know about?

- I will not be able to enter this room, as it is locked.
- The peephole is quite high on the cell door.



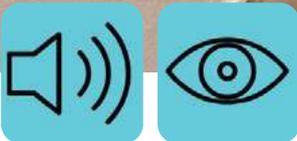
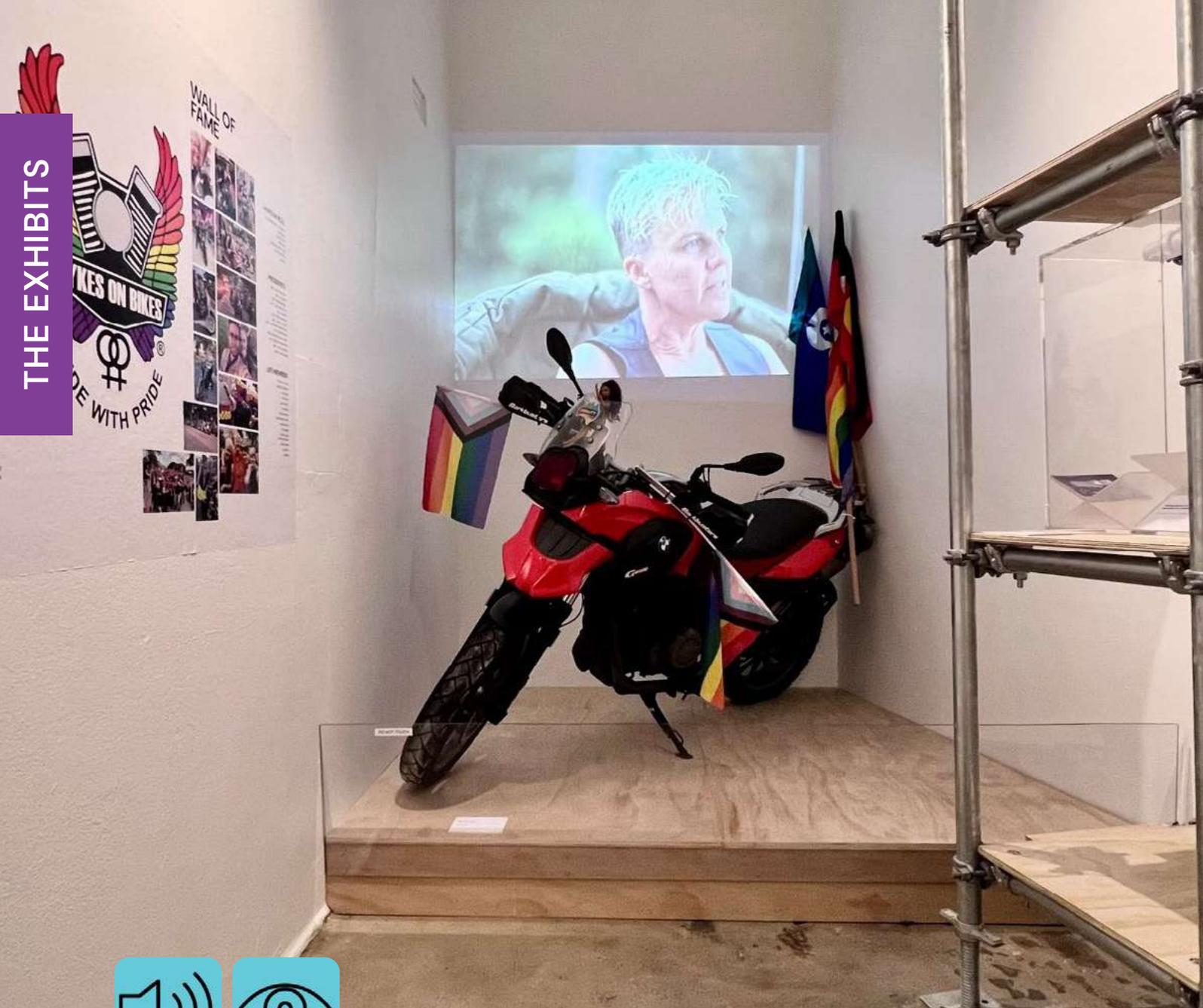
## CRIME TO FREEDOM

### What's in here?

- This is a collection of stories, milestones and artefacts showing the recent history of the path from being criminals to freedom and the pursuit of equality by LGBTQIA+ communities.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There is a high step up into this room. I will not be able to access this room if I am in a wheelchair.
- There are three display cabinets in the centre of the room, an iPad with headphones, and a video with loud noises on the wall.



## DYKES ON BIKES

### What's in here?

- This exhibit celebrates Dykes on Bikes, Australia's longest running female identified motorcycle club and one of Australia's oldest LGBTQIA+ community groups.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There pieces of memorabilia on the right-hand side of the room, a video playing on the back wall, and a motorcycle.
- The motorcycle is fenced off and I must not touch it.



## HIV TODAY/WARD 17 SOUTH

### What's in here?

- This exhibit provides an historical and contemporary context for the ongoing understanding of HIV/AIDS, as well as a look into what a room in the first HIV/AIDS treatment and care centre in Australia looked like, as well as a video based around this.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There is a bench that I can use in the front room. There is a hospital bed and chair in the back room, which I must not use.



## HIV/AIDS MEMORIAL

### What's in here?

- This memorial is a carefully crafted invitation for the community to share their experiences, featuring a dynamic digital interface showcasing stories of HIV/AIDS both past and present.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There is a large vertical screen with white panels that can be very bright. There is also a bench I can use here.



## WE'RE HERE, WE'RE QUEER

### What's in here?

- We're Here, We're Queer celebrates LGBTQIA+ history with a large-scale drawing of Pride in Sydney, as well as an A-Z list of LGBTQIA+ terms that are used within our queer community.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There is a touch screen map of LGBTQIA+ Pride Events around Australia that I can interact with.
- This is a very bright room with a reflective floor and very colourful items. I can sit on the bench in here if needed.



## LESBIANS ON THE LOOSE

### What's in here?

- Lesbians on the Loose (or LOTL) is the longest running lesbian publication in Australia, running since 1990.
- There are a range of covers from important issues on display.

### Anything else I should know about?

- A video with audio is playing in the room.
- There are two grey boxes that I can sit on in this room.



## SYDNEY STAR OBSERVER

### What's in here?

- Sydney Star Observer have been reporting LGBTQIA+ news for 45 years.
- There are a range of covers from important issues on display.

### Anything else I should know about?

- A video with audio is playing in the room.
- A bench is in this room.
- There are papers on top of a display cabinet I can look at as well as iPads with the Sydney Star Observer website.



## SYDNEY WORLD PRIDE

### What's in here?

- Sydney WorldPride was held in 2023. It was the first WorldPride to be held in the Southern Hemisphere and the largest LGBTQIA+ event ever staged in the region.

### Anything else I should know about?

- A display of gum leaves is in the centre of this room, as well as mannequins around the outside of the room.
- There is a disco ball in this room with bright light shining on it.
- A video is playing in this room, and I can sit on the box provided.



## DIRTY WORDS

### What's in here?

- A collection of poetry and works from six indigenous writers as part of this United Nations Decade of Indigenous Languages.

### Anything else I should know about?

- There are very bright white lights in this room.
- There are large paper drapes on the left-hand side of this room that I must not touch.



## THE ORIGINAL ACTIVISTS

### What's in here?

- A celebration of the LGBTQIA+ Trailblazers of First Nations communities. Portraits and works of those who brought the community into the spotlight through activism and creativity.

### Anything else I should know about?

- Some artworks and posters are on the floor, which are fine for me to walk across to see what's on the walls.
- There's a video playing in the back of the exhibit. There are also some bright lights in this room.



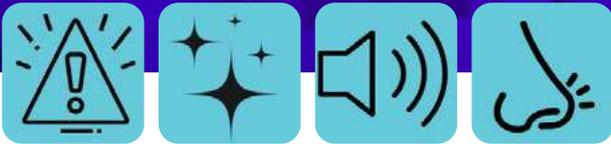
## 130 BPM: SOUNDTRACK TO A REVOLUTION

### What's in here?

- An audio/visual experience of Queer Australian music from the 1970s through to now.
- This exhibit takes place at the Substation in Taylor Square. I will need to leave the main exhibition hall and cross the road.

### Anything else I should know about?

- I will be unable to enter this exhibit if I'm in a wheelchair. The room is quite dark, and there are stairs leading down. I can take a seat once I am downstairs. I can ask a volunteer for help.



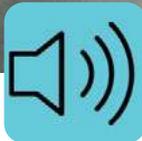
## THE UNDERGROUND: SEXUALITY AND PROTEST

### What's in here?

- The Underground public toilets in Taylor Square were a beat until it was closed to the public in 1988. This explores queer public sex and those who emerging subcultural icons of the time.

### Anything else I should know about?

- I will be unable to enter this exhibit if I'm in a wheelchair. There is a steep staircase going down. It may be quite slippery, and there are some very strong smells.



# LOADING DOCK THEATRE

The Loading Dock Theatre is a theatre space with performances all year round. It is also used for educational and private events.

Since seats are unassigned, I can choose where I would like to sit.

If I require extra time choosing a seat, I can speak to a volunteer, and they can help me.

If I use a wheelchair, there are 3 spaces available here.

There is a hearing loop available if I need to connect my compatible hearing aids to hear a performance.



There are three entries into the Loading Dock Theatre:

- The main entrance is through the Loading Dock, which is a green roller door outside on Forbes Street.
- If I am not in a wheelchair, I can enter through the exhibition up the ramp in the right-hand corridor. There is a step down into the lobby of the theatre.
- If I am in the wheelchair, I can ask for assistance from a volunteer. I can go down the corridor on the left-hand corridor, past the door near the accessible toilets. I will find the door into the theatre on the right.



# THE SUBSTATION

This is an intimate performance space that seats 40 people.

The Substation is only accessible via stairs.

When I enter this space, I will need to watch my head as I enter, as the entry is quite low.

There are stairs heading down, but a railing on the left-hand side.

There will be lights on before and after performances.

There are no toilets in the Substation, so I will need to use the toilets in either Qtopia Sydney or The Oxford Hotel.

# Reach out for help

If these exhibitions are triggering for you or someone you know,  
please reach out to the following organisations where help is available.

**ACON**  
[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

**The Gender Centre**  
[gendercentre.org.au](http://gendercentre.org.au)

**Beyond Blue**  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**Bobby Goldsmith Foundation**  
[www.bgf.org.au](http://www.bgf.org.au)

**Inner City Legal Centre**  
[www.iclc.org.au](http://www.iclc.org.au)

**Minus18**  
[www.minus18.org.au](http://www.minus18.org.au)

**Positive Life NSW**

## IF I NEED SUPPORT

Qtopia Sydney has a lot of Queer History and Culture to showcase. Some of the things I have seen today may have been triggering.

It is okay for me to reach out for help if I need it. I can reach out to the following organisations if I need to:

**ACON**  
[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

**The Gender Centre**  
[www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)

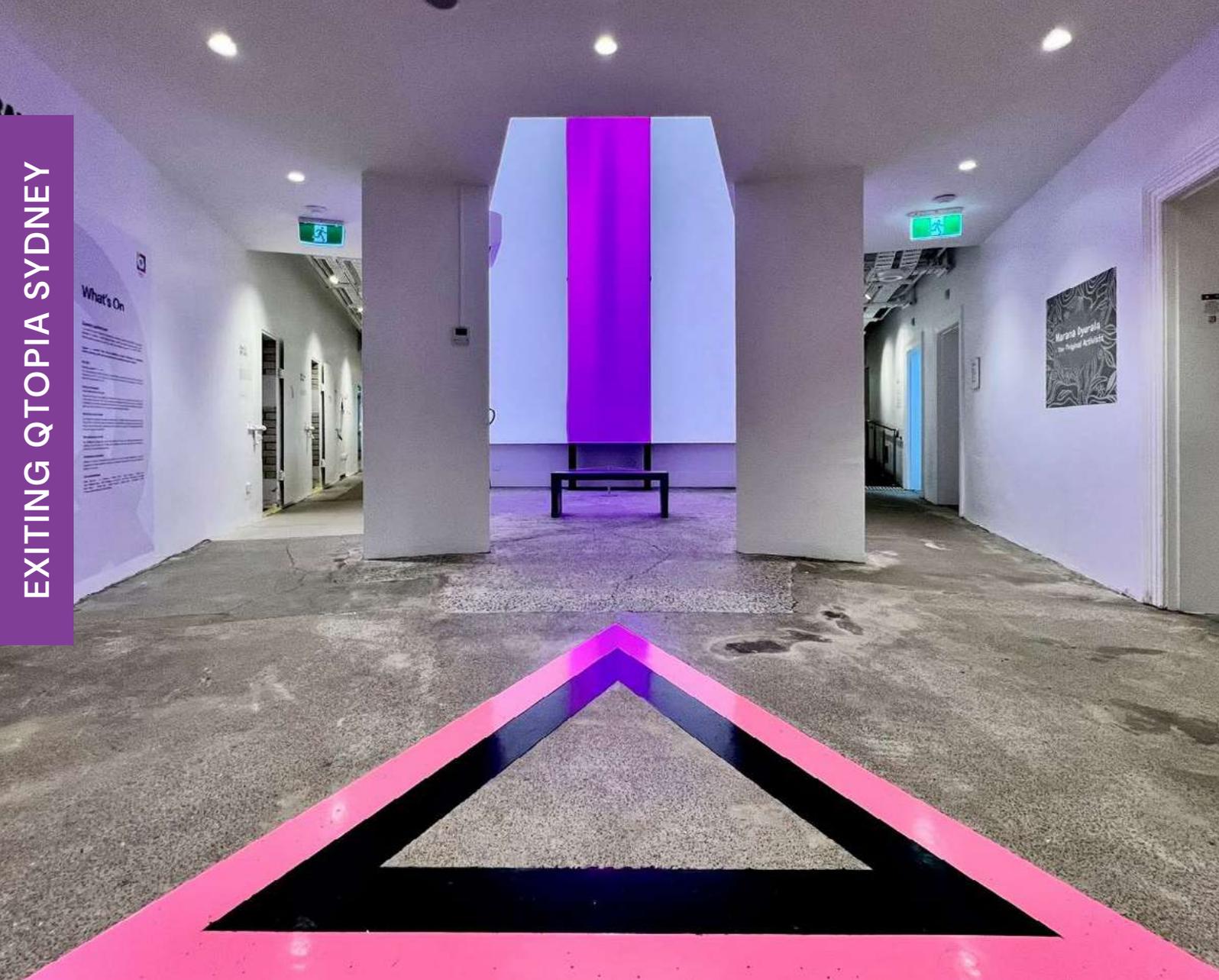
**Beyond Blue**  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**Bobby Goldsmith Foundation**  
[www.bgf.org.au](http://www.bgf.org.au)

**Inner City Legal Centre**  
[www.iclc.org.au](http://www.iclc.org.au)

**Minus18**  
[www.minus18.org.au](http://www.minus18.org.au)

**Positive Life NSW**  
[www.positivelife.org.au](http://www.positivelife.org.au)



# EXITING QTOPIA SYDNEY

I will now have visited every exhibit at Qtopia Sydney if I followed the suggested route.

I can exit through the black door in the main hall, which takes me back to the foyer where I first met the volunteers who helped me with my tickets.

The volunteers will open the electronic doors for me as I exit.



**QTOPIA**  
SYDNEY

**QTOPIA SYDNEY**  
301 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst  
**[qtopiasydney.com.au](http://qtopiasydney.com.au)**